

# 296. It's all in the game

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT (15-17)
Pass	3♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	3♦ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	3♠ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Do you have a 5-card major?

(2) No.

(3) I have four hearts, not four spades. Pick the contract.

What would you lead as West from:

♠ KJ92  
♥ 84  
♦ 7643  
♣ Q43

Today's deal comes from the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Knockout Teams), Round of 16, Session 3.

Board 33: Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 65	
	♥ AQ107	
	♦ K1098	
	♣ 1052	
West		East
♠ KJ92		♠ A1084
♥ 84		♥ J62
♦ 7643		♦ Q2
♣ Q43		♣ K986
	South	
	♠ Q73	
	♥ K953	
	♦ AJ5	
	♣ AJ7	

After the auction above, West led the ♦7: ten – two – five. Declarer continued with the ♦8: queen – ace – six (suit-preference for spades). Declarer cashed ♦J, crossed to the ♥A and played the ♦K. When the hearts behaved, he had 4 diamonds, 4 hearts and the ♣A, 9 tricks, +400.

- Points to note:
1. North's 3♣ was forcing to game. North upgraded the 9-count, usually suitable for a game-invitation opposite 15-17 points, because of the three tens.
  2. South knew there was a 4-4 heart fit, but chose 3NT because of the 4-3-3-3 pattern. A 4-3-3-3 opposite a 4-3-3-3 usually makes as many tricks in no-trumps and in the 4-4 major fit. When that number is nine, you want to be in 3NT. A 4-3-3-3 opposite a 4-4-3-2 often does better in 3NT than in 4-major.
  3. If West had led the ♠2, the defence could take the first four tricks. After a club or a heart exit at trick 5 would mean declarer would have to find the ♦Q.
  4. If North-South end in 4♥, a diamond lead by West would solve South's problems, just as it did against 3NT. If West leads a trump against 4♥, South will again need to locate the ♦Q. There is no reason why South should pick the diamond layout.

At the other table, North-South bid Pass : 1NT, 2♣ : 2♦, 2NT, all pass. West did lead the ♠2 and the defence took four spade tricks, followed by ♣6 from East, low, ♣Q. Declarer made eight tricks for +120, but 7 Imps away.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2♥ <sup>(1)</sup>

Pass ?

(1) 6 hearts, 6-10 points

What would you do as North with:

♠ Q1093

♥ A

♦ K87

♣ AK985

**Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?**

*There are some brains like the Bermuda Triangle. Information goes in, never to be found again.*